

Conference Standing Orders

MADE AND APPROVED BY THE CONFERENCE 1995
AMENDED 1996, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007

1 Notice, Minutes and Attendance

- (i) The General Secretary shall send to each member of the Conference 21 clear days' notice of every meeting of the Conference.
- (ii) The General Secretary shall have the responsibility for ensuring that the minutes of all proceedings at any meeting of the Conference be taken and kept together with a record of the attendance of members.

2 Annual Meeting of the Conference

- (i) The Conference shall normally meet annually during the week preceding Easter Sunday.
- (ii) Resolutions can be put forward by the Executive Committee, by Branches and by individual members of the Conference. All resolutions must have a proposer and seconder who must be members attending the Conference and whose names must accompany the resolution. Any member of the Conference wishing to bring forward any resolution at the annual meeting of the Conference, held in accordance with Rule 43, shall give specific notice of such resolution, in writing, to the General Secretary before 1 January in the year of that meeting of the Conference, unless the Standing Orders Committee determines otherwise. Such notice must be signed and dated. In the case of a resolution from a Branch, similar notice shall be given by the Secretary of the Branch. Branches must send with each resolution the name and address of the proposer.
For any meeting of the Conference other than the annual meeting, resolutions shall be submitted in accordance with the provisions of this Standing Order, save that for 1 January shall be substituted a date ten days before the first day of that meeting.
- (iii) No branch may submit more than five resolutions to a meeting of the Conference.
- (iv) No individual member of the Conference may be named, either as proposer or seconder, in more than one individual member's resolution.
- (v) A resolution may be considered unsuitable if, in the opinion of the Standing Orders Committee, it represents a worsening of a current policy position. Standing Order 9(ii) shall apply to this consideration.

3 Agenda Paper

- (i) The Standing Orders Committee shall edit the Agenda Paper.
- (ii) The Honorary Secretaries shall communicate with the proposers of resolutions with a view to agreeing the wording of resolutions which the Standing Orders Committee has indicated should be composited. In the event of a failure to agree on wording, the decision of the Standing Orders Committee shall be final.
- (iii) The Standing Orders Committee shall be able to amend the wording, but not the substance, of any other resolution.

4 Changes to Order of Business

- (i) Before the start of the First Session of the Conference, a ballot of all members shall be completed in order to determine five resolutions which may be given priority in order to ensure that they are discussed during the Conference meeting. The first three resolutions under Standing Order 6(xii) listed

in each session on the Conference agenda, other than those listed for the First Session of that meeting, shall not be eligible to be given priority.

- (ii) The President shall be at liberty to add to the Agenda any additional business which, in her/his opinion, it will be expedient for the Conference to consider and shall determine the position on the Agenda of such business.

5 Chairman

The President for the year shall take the Chair. If s/he is unable or declines to do so, the Senior Vice-President or, failing her/him, the Junior Vice-President shall preside. Failing either of them, the members present shall choose one of their number to be Chairman.

6 Order of Proceedings at the Annual Meeting

The items (i) to (xi) below shall be heard in closed session, defined as being in the presence of only the Conference members, Association staff and other professional advisers specified by the Executive Committee.

The order of proceedings at the annual meeting of the Conference shall be as follows:

- (i) The minutes of the previous meeting shall be confirmed and signed.
- (ii) The names of the nine tellers previously appointed for the duration of the Conference by the Standing Orders Committee shall be announced. These shall comprise three Officials, three Executive Committee members, and three ordinary members of the Conference, of whom six (including at least one in each category) shall officiate on each occasion.
- (iii) The Chairman shall announce the names of members elected to the offices of Vice-President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer.
- (iv) The Appeals Committee shall be appointed in accordance with the Appendix to the Standing Orders.
- (v) The Annual Report of the Executive Committee shall be presented.
- (vi) The Annual Statement of Accounts and the Report of the Finance Committee shall be presented.
- (vii) Reports from any committee of the Conference shall be presented.
- (viii) Reports, if any, prepared on the instruction of the Conference shall be presented.
- (ix) Business brought forward by the Chairman shall be taken.
- (x) The date and place of the next annual meeting shall be announced.
- (xi) Resolutions to amend the Constitution, Rules, and the Standing Orders of the Conference shall be taken.
- (xii) Resolutions which have been proposed in accordance with Standing Order 2, arranged as the Standing Orders Committee shall direct, provided that the President shall have discretion to vary the order of business in order to ensure that priority resolutions as defined in accordance with Standing Order 4(i), are discussed.

This item shall not be taken until the items under 6(i) to 6(xi) above have been concluded.

7 Meetings of the Conference called by the President

The order of proceedings at meetings of the Conference called by the President shall be as follows:

- (i) The minutes of the previous meeting shall be confirmed and signed.
- (ii) Business brought forward by the Chairman shall be taken.
- (iii) Resolutions from the Executive Committee and resolutions which have been proposed by Branches or by individual members of the Conference, arranged as the Standing Orders Committee shall direct.

8 Meetings of the Conference requisitioned by Members

- (i) Any meeting of the Conference requisitioned by 100 members under Rule 43 shall deal only with resolutions relevant to the object stated in the notice.

- (ii) The Standing Orders Committee shall place the resolutions in order. Any resolution received which is not relevant to the stated object shall be deemed unsuitable.

9 Suitable Business

- (i) A resolution shall be suitable for consideration by the Conference if it is consistent with the objects of the Association, subject to Standing Order 8(ii).
- (ii) If two-thirds of those present at a meeting of the Standing Orders Committee shall be of the opinion that any resolution proposed to be put before the Conference is not suitable, such resolution shall not be printed on the Agenda Paper. As soon as practicable, the proposer of the resolution shall be provided with a written statement of the reasons for the resolution being declared unsuitable. The Chairman shall in secret session, read the resolution to the Conference. A statement on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee followed by a statement by the proposer of the resolution, neither exceeding three minutes, shall be made to the Conference. These shall relate only to suitability. The Conference shall then, without discussion, vote on whether the resolution should be debated. The resolution shall only be placed on the agenda if two-thirds of the members present and voting agree.
- (iii) Where a resolution contains serious misconceptions or factual errors, the Standing Orders Committee shall edit it to remove these, in consultation with the proposer. If this is not possible, the resolution shall not be suitable business.

10 Speaking in Debate

- (i) All debates shall be conducted through the Chair.
- (ii) The proposer of an original motion may speak for no more than six minutes, and no other speeches shall extend beyond three minutes. A warning will be given one minute before the end of the time allowed for a speech.
- (iii) Exceptionally, at the request of the Conference, the Chairman may allow one further minute for a speech to be concluded.

11 Irrelevance or Repetition

The Chairman shall call to order any member who persists in irrelevance or tedious repetition, either of her/his own arguments or of the arguments used by other members in debate, and may thereafter, if the said member persists, direct her/him to discontinue her/his speech.

12 Resolutions and Debate

- (i) Every resolution shall begin with the words 'That Conference'.
- (ii) Every resolution must be seconded, unless moved from the Chair. Any member may second a resolution formally and may at that time reserve her/his speech.
- (iii) When a resolution has been seconded, the Chairman shall allow debate.
- (iv) If no member indicates a wish to speak, the Chairman shall immediately proceed to put the resolution to the vote.
- (v) Not more than one resolution and one amendment to it shall be debated at the same time.
- (vi) The same resolution or amended resolution shall not be proposed a second time at the same meeting or at any adjournment thereof.

13 Amendments

- (i) Every amendment shall be relevant to the resolution under debate. The Chairman's decision as to relevance shall be final.

- (ii) No amendment shall be proposed which would change a resolution to a negative form, or would alter the first three words.
- (iii) No amendment shall be proposed which, if carried, would make the resolution before the Conference substantially the same as any already debated at the same meeting.
- (iv) Every amendment shall be in writing, and shall be signed by the proposer and seconder. An amendment may be proposed by a Branch or the Executive Committee, but not when the resolution is printed in the Agenda in the name of that Branch or of the Executive Committee. Where an amendment is in the name of individual members of the Conference, it shall only be put to the Conference if the proposer and seconder are present at the time. Where an amendment is submitted by a Branch or the Executive Committee and the proposer and/or seconder are not present at that meeting of the Conference, different representatives from that Branch or different members of the Executive Committee may move and/or second the amendment, provided that the terms of Standing Orders 13(vi) and 19 are complied with.
- (v) When the Chairman decides to take an amendment, the proposer of the resolution being debated shall be asked if s/he is prepared to accept the amendment. If the amendment is acceptable to the proposer, then the Conference shall immediately move to a vote on whether to accept it without debate. If that is accepted, debate will continue on the amended resolution. If that is not accepted, debate will proceed on both the resolution and the amendment together according to Standing Order 13(xi) *et seq.*
- (vi) Amendments received at Headquarters addressed to the Honorary Secretaries at least two working days before the day on which the First Session of the Conference falls shall be debated. These amendments will be made available in writing to members at the start of that meeting of the Conference. Amendments will also be debated if they are in the hands of the Honorary Secretaries up to 20 minutes after the end of the preceding day's meeting of the Conference.
- (vii) The Chairman shall decide whether any amendment proposed should not be put to the Conference because to do so would not be in accordance with the Standing Orders or because the amendment is not suitable business as defined in Standing Order 9(i).
- (viii) The Honorary Secretaries shall discuss with the movers any amendments which are similar in wording or intent with a view to agreeing a form of wording which would reduce the number of amendments debated. In the event of an agreement not being reached, amendments that are similar shall be taken in the order in which they were received and Standing Order 13(vii) will apply.
- (ix) An amendment may be withdrawn on the receipt by the Chairman of a written request signed by the proposer and seconder of the amendment, provided that the amendment has not been put to the Conference as in Standing Order 13(xi). Subject to Standing Order 13(viii), the Chairman shall decide the order in which amendments will be put and the time at which this will happen.
- (x) An amendment may not be proposed or seconded by any member who has already spoken in the debate. The seconder of an amendment may not reserve her/his speech.
- (xi) When an amendment has been proposed and seconded to the Conference, it shall be stated from the Chair, and then the debate may proceed on the original resolution and the amendment together.
- (xii) Any member may speak in the debate even though s/he has spoken to the original resolution.
- (xiii) When an amendment is lost, debate on the original resolution will continue, but a further amendment may be taken.
- (xiv) When an amendment is carried, debate will continue on the amended resolution and a further amendment may be taken.
- (xv) Amendments raised during the course of debate shall be considered when all amendments submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13(vi) have been taken. These amendments will only be put to the

Conference if the Chairman deems them to be suitable business, and in accordance with the Standing Orders, and if 150 members of the Conference present and voting agree.

14 Concluding Debate

- (i) When the Chairman decides that the Conference is able to come to a decision on a resolution or on an amendment, s/he shall put it to the vote.
 - (ii) The following procedural resolutions may be proposed:
 - (a) That the vote be now taken.
 - (b) That the Conference do now adjourn.
 - (c) That the debate be now adjourned.
 - (d) That the Conference move to the next business on the Agenda.
 - (iii) Procedural resolutions shall not be considered without their being seconded and any debate allowed by the Standing Orders shall be on the matter of the procedural resolution only.
 - (iv) Procedural resolutions shall not be amended.
 - (v) Procedural resolutions may be moved at any time, but not so as to interrupt a member of the Conference who has started speaking nor during debate on any other procedural resolution.
 - (vi) No procedural resolution may be proposed or seconded by a member who has spoken in the debate but, once before the Conference, any member may speak in the debate.
 - (vii) The proposer of any procedural resolution shall have no right to reply to the debate.
 - (viii) The resolution 'That the vote be now taken' shall be put to the vote without debate. It shall normally be taken forthwith unless the Chairman decides that to do so is an infringement of Standing Orders or would prejudice balanced debate. If an amendment is being debated, this resolution shall apply only to the amendment.
 - (ix) If the resolution to adjourn a debate is lost, it may not be moved again during that debate.
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15 Right of Reply

- (i) The proposer of the substantive resolution may reply to the whole debate, but the reply must be strictly confined to points raised in the debate, and must not introduce any fresh matter.
 - (ii) There shall be no right of reply to the debate on an amendment.
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16 Right to Speak

- (i) No member shall speak more than once on any resolution or amendment except as provided in Standing Order 15, or to raise a point of order or, with the Chairman's consent, by way of personal explanation or to ask or answer a question.
 - (ii) No member shall speak in a debate after the proposer has replied to the debate.
 - (iii) The Chairman may speak as often as s/he pleases before the mover's reply.
 - (iv) Any member may raise a point of order at any time. This must relate to a deviation from the Standing Orders of Conference and the point shall be dealt with immediately. The decision of the Chairman on any point shall be final.
 - (v) A member wishing to ask a question relevant to the discussion may do so during a debate, but not so as to interrupt a speech. A member wishing to ask a question shall have no priority over members wishing to speak in the debate.
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17 Voting

- (i) Where a resolution on the previously circulated Agenda Paper or brought forward as urgent business contains numbered sections, the Chairman shall announce before debate starts whether s/he intends to take a separate vote on each section or on the resolution as a whole.

- (ii) If, during the course of debate on a resolution, the Conference approves an amendment to a resolution which would create numbered sections, the Chairman shall announce before the start of any further debate whether s/he intends to take a separate vote on each section or on the resolution (as amended) as a whole.
- (iii) Where a resolution has words before the first numbered part in addition to the words 'THAT Conference' those words shall be read in conjunction with each numbered part and shall be deemed to fall if each numbered part is lost.
- (iv) Decisions on all resolutions shall be determined in the first instance by a show of hands. If the Chairman considers the result uncertain, s/he shall order a vote by ballot and shall instruct members of the Conference which ballot paper is to be used.
- (v) If any member believes that the Chairman has wrongly decided the outcome of the show of hands, s/he shall raise the matter, as a point of order, immediately the Chairman announces her/his decision. Upon the matter being raised, the Chairman shall call on all members who wish for a ballot to be taken to raise one hand. If at least 100 members so indicate, a ballot shall be held. The number of hands raised shall be counted by the tellers at the request of the Chairman who shall order a count if a request is made by the member raising the matter.
- (vi) Once the Chairman has ordered a vote by ballot on any resolution or amendment, discussion of that resolution shall cease forthwith. Whilst the ballot is counted, the Chairman may take other business from the Agenda. The result of the ballot shall be announced when such other business is completed and the Chairman shall return to the normal order of business.

18 The Conference in Secret or Private Session

- (i) Any member may propose at any time 'That the Conference go into secret session' or 'That the Conference go into private session'. The Conference shall immediately enter that session.
- (ii) The proposer of this resolution shall then have one minute to explain her/his reasons for so proposing. If a resolution is currently being debated or has been called, the proposer of that resolution may also have one minute to explain (if appropriate) her/his reasons for opposing the resolution that the Conference go into secret or private session.
- (iii) The resolution shall then immediately be put to the vote.
- (iv) If lost, the Conference shall return to normal session. If carried, the Conference shall continue in secret or private session. Secret or private session shall automatically end when the matter under consideration has been concluded.
- (v) No record of debate in secret session will be published and no record of debate in private session will be published, except with the consent of the Conference.
- (vi) If a proposer of a resolution before the Conference chooses not to exercise her/his right to speak as in Standing Order 18(ii), then the Chairman shall call any one speaker against the procedural motion.

19 Absence of Proposer and Seconder

No resolution or amendment shall be proposed in the absence of its named proposer and seconder unless written permission for a substitute (named or otherwise) has been given to the Honorary Secretaries by the proposer or the Branch.

20 Urgent Business

- (i) Any two members present at a meeting of the Conference may bring forward a resolution, which they believe is urgent, and which could not be submitted for inclusion.

- (ii) The resolution shall be considered by the officers of the Standing Orders Committee for suitability under Standing Order 9(i). Those officers shall then consider whether the resolution could have been included on the Agenda Paper under the Standing Orders and whether it is sufficiently urgent for consideration at that meeting of Conference.
- (iii) The resolution shall, at a time decided by the Chairman, be read to the Conference and a statement shall be made on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee. The Conference shall then vote, without debate, on whether the resolution shall be placed before that meeting of the Conference. For success, two-thirds of the members voting must vote in favour.
- (iv) If the Conference decides to consider the resolution it shall be debated at such time as the Chairman shall decide.

21 Quorum

At each session of the Conference, 100 shall form a quorum (Rule 44). Whenever, during the transaction of business, the Chairman's attention is called to the fact that a quorum is not present, proceedings shall be suspended for ten minutes, or until a quorum is formed. If, after the expiry of ten minutes, a quorum is not present, the Chairman shall declare the session at an end. The names of those who are present shall be recorded in the minutes.

Appendix

Appointment of the Appeals Committee

- (i) The Agenda Paper for the Annual Meeting of the Conference shall include a resolution to be proposed and seconded by the Honorary Secretaries for the appointment of seven persons to the Appeals Committee of the Conference. The resolution shall name the persons so proposed and seconded and state their respective branches.
- (ii) The persons proposed and seconded shall be members of the Conference on the first day of its Annual Meeting who are not at that time members of the Executive Committee.
- (iii) It shall be open to any Branch or individual member of the Conference other than a member of the Executive Committee to propose an amendment by way of adding one or more names to the list, but not by way of deleting any name. Such an amendment must be in writing, and must be signed by the proposer and seconder and by the nominated person.
- (iv) An amendment to add to the list of names will only be considered if it is received in Headquarters, addressed to the Honorary Secretaries, at least two working days before the day on which the First Session of the Annual Meeting of the Conference falls.
- (v) If names are added by way of amendment, a secret ballot of those members present will be held during the First Session of the Conference. The ballot paper will contain the names and branches of all the candidates and members of Conference will be allowed up to seven votes. There shall be no discussion or debate prior to the ballot.
- (vi) The seven candidates with highest numbers of votes will be declared elected and in the event of a tie the Chairman of the Conference for the time being will draw lots.
- (vii) In the event of any member of the Committee becoming ineligible to serve by reason of ceasing to be a member of Conference, or by becoming a member of the Executive Committee, the next highest unsuccessful nominated person in the ballot will be appointed unless none exists in which case no replacement will be appointed.
- (viii) The Committee will take office immediately and serve until the next Committee is elected. Members will be eligible for re-election if they remain members of Conference.

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